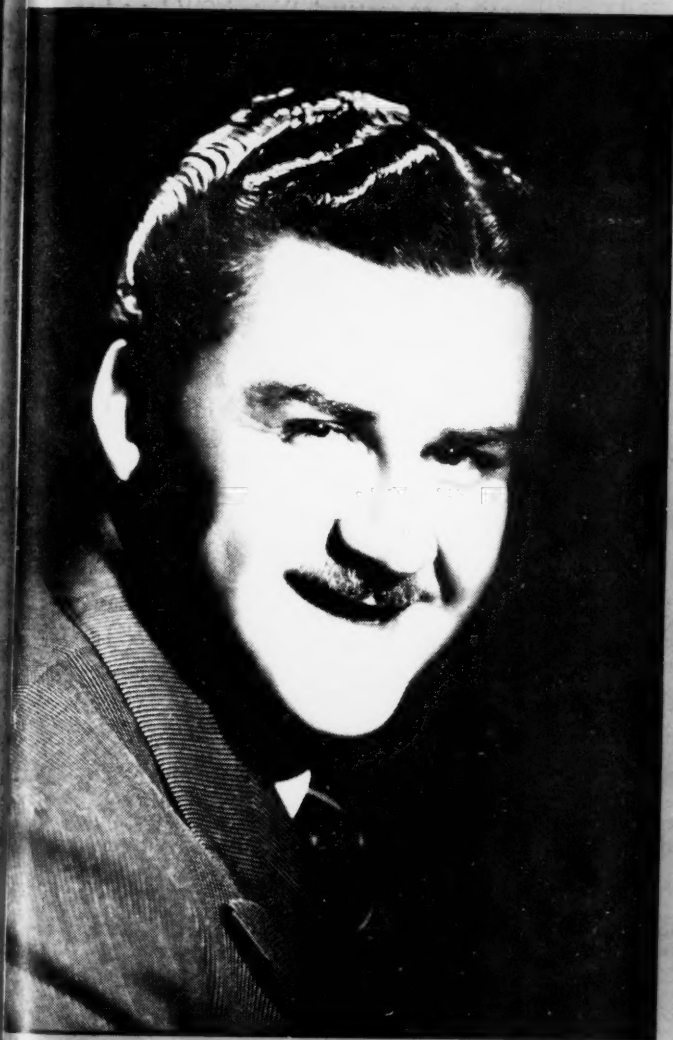


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The AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

MAY, 1944

20 CENTS



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MOSTLY PERSONAL

By JOHN T. BARTLETT, Co-Publisher



John T. Bartlett

HOW DOES an editorial director get that way? Ralph Daigh, now holding the post with Fawcett, had a lucky break as a college student. He had taken the cash won in an oratorical contest, bought a second-hand typewriter, and begun to free-lance to all manner of magazines. During a summer vacation, working as a bus boy at Breezy Point Lodge in Northern Minnesota, he tapped-tapped on his machine late at night. Capt. W. H. Fawcett, Sr., owner of the lodge, walking through the employes' quarters, heard the youth at work and was curious. "Look me up when you're through school," he told young Daigh.

Daigh did, and worked for a year with the Fawcett group, then at Robbinsdale, Minn. He accepted an offer from a New York publisher. When Fawcett moved east a few years later, Daigh joined the company as associate editor. He climbed fast, was managing editor of all company magazines at 28.

Something of a superman among editors is the individual who directs a large group (15 magazines in the case of Fawcett.) In his earlier days, as editor of *Movie Story*, Daigh tripled the circulation in six months. That is only one among his many spectacular accomplishments. Each month some 10,000,000 people lay down their money at newsstands and pick up Fawcett publications. It has been the job of Ralph Daigh, working with a staff, to create magazines which would build and hold enormous circulations.

Sensing trends and adjusting editorial strategy to them is perhaps the most difficult task an editorial director has. But rounded-out performance calls for important routine detail. Daigh, for example, gives the final O.K. on every manuscript purchased for the Fawcett magazines. He collaborates with the art department on the cover subjects and makes the final decision on all finished covers. He checks cover blurbs. He is constantly in conference with editors. Busy as he is, he is always glad to have free-lance writers call at his office.

Ralph Daigh was born in South Dakota, attended the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Once he was sports editor of the *Mason City, Iowa, Gazette*. He was editor of the Dell pulp magazines in 1932 and 1933. He worked on the *New York World-Telegram*, and free-lanced for a year.

"I feel this way about people who read magazines," he told me. "Magazine readers do not move their lips when they read."

"In other words, the magazine audience is a discriminating, intelligent audience, much above the statistical average, no matter what magazines they read as long as they read magazines regularly. Magazines demand the sincere, honest, and best efforts of their contributors. There is no such thing possible as successfully writing down."

Life Story, *True*, *True Confessions*, *Mechanix Illustrated*, and *Motion Picture*, are five of the very popular Fawcett titles, all excellent markets for free-lance writers.

One of David Lavender's short stories appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* a few weeks ago. He has appeared often in other magazines, including the pulps; the other day I noted a book by him in a

window display. Colorado writers, who knew Dave when he was a shy beginner, have noted his success with a great deal of pleasure. He lives at present in Ojai, California, where as a war-time activity he teaches in a private school.

▲ ▲ ▲

Theodore Pratt did "That Historical Novel" for us in Hollywood, taking time out from work on a movie script ("Mr. Winkle Goes To War," starring Edward G. Robinson.) His latest novel, "Thunder Mountain," is just off the press. Mr. Pratt lived in Minneapolis, where he was born, 14 years; New Rochelle, N. Y., 12 years; Paris one year, New York four years, France two years, Spain two years, Florida seven years, North Carolina one year.

"Perhaps it is because of this skipping about the globe," remarked a commentator, "that Mr. Pratt is one of the most versatile of authors. He has written everything from pulp stories to *belles lettres* in the lit'ry papers. Around 500 of his stories and articles have been published in some 50 magazines and half a dozen anthologies. His own dramatization of one of his novels, 'Big Blow,' ran for six months on Broadway.

"Of his round dozen of novels, no two are alike or even in the same vein. He has ranged all the way from pure fantasy in 'Mr. Limpit' to romantic adventure in 'Mercy Island.' Occasionally he tosses off a mystery under a name he refuses to divulge because he enjoys listening to comments about them from people who don't know he wrote them."

Usually the author of a successful book follows up his success with another book based on the same formula. "This," Mr. Pratt remarks, "would bore me to tears, no matter how much money it might make. I like to tackle something new and different each time. It's like a writing challenge."

▲ ▲ ▲

Between the writing last fall of "New Twists To Old Themes," and publication of the article in this issue, Norman A. Fox (whose home is in Great Falls, Montana), wrote on contract for Dodd, Mead & Co., a Western novel, "The Thundering Trail," published in April. Most of Mr. Fox's magazine appearances have been in *Street & Smith* and *Popular Publications* books, but he has also written for *Red Circle*, *Dell*, *Fiction House*, *Columbia* and *Ace*.

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MAY, 1944

No. 5

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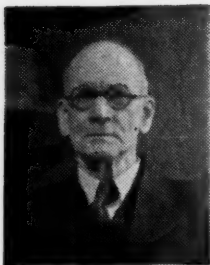
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THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

May, 1944

LESS PLOT, PLEASE

... By DAVID LAVENDER

The Reader's Digest, that marvelous, many-throated regurgitator of predigested information, carried in its April issue a twelve-word sentence which should be read and re-read by every aspiring writer. The sentence occurred in an article entitled "Hollywood Listens to the Audience," and the condensation described a survey method by which movie producers determine in advance whether or not a proposed picture will click.

The procedure of this prognostication is simple: pollsters reduce a picture idea to skeleton form and let prospective fans gnaw on the bare bone for taste. The significant point is this: the fans accurately analyze the flavor of that meatless bone! The appetizers, spices, and sauces which will be stewed up with it to make the full-course meal are not necessary ingredients in predetermining basic succulence.

In other words, the fundamental idea, or plot, of a successful motion picture is starkly simple; so simple, indeed, that—and here I quote the vital twelve words—"if it's a good story, you can tell it in three sentences."

If this fact is relevant in the making of a full-length motion picture, how much more relevant it should be in the writing of a 5000-word short story! What, then, of the beginning writer who is worried about having too little plot? He should, perhaps, be more concerned over having too much.

Before arguing this point it will be necessary to define "plot," so that we can be sure we are talking about the same thing. By plot I mean simply the framework upon which a story is hung. To use an obvious analogy: every human body has a supporting skeleton. Furthermore, discounting abnormalities which possess interest only for the morbid or for the specialist seeking cures, the human skeleton has not, and never did have, many variations. And yet consider what an infinite variety of people has been borne by that same old bony form!

The same thing is true of basic plots. There are only a few of them, and they have not changed greatly since those golden days of Greece when Hippocrates was discovering the immutable patterns of anatomy and his contemporary, gloomy old Euripedes, was tracing out the enduring forms of drama.

There is nothing new in this statement. Goethe and Schiller noted the limited number of plots; and Georges Polti, stirred by their statements, read thousands of works, extracting from them all only "The Thirty-six Dramatic Situations," which, ever since its publication, has been a standard handbook for writers.

The same factors of fundamental simplicity underlie the various mechanical plot devices on the market: you shuffle cards, spin dials, or chase numbered headings through a book, and you wind up with a ready-made story. It is quite true, as the manufacturers state, that the plots show a multitude of surface differences. But it is also true that they gain their value, which is considerable, from the fact that *they have reduced the plots to bare essentials, stating these essentials in a few sentences*. This really beautiful streamlining would be impossible were it not for the core of similarity in every dramatic pattern.

One main element of this core is, of course, conflict. Indeed, the whole essence of drama is conflict, be it internal, the character versus himself ("Hamlet"); or a conflict with the imponderables of Fate (the Greek tragedies); or with the physical world, its storm, and wild beasts ("Moby Dick"), in part; or with a solid, satisfying, beetle-browed villain (any issue of *Western Stories*). This brings us straight to the aphorism that has been dinned again and again into the ears of beginning writers: a story consists of a character, his problem, his struggle, and its outcome. That's all—and yet so many writers (not just beginners, either) simply will not take the time and trouble to cast their plots in that simple way. The result is that they often do not possess a sound plot, and, what is worse, they write the whole story without ever knowing it isn't sound.

I admit that difficulties lie in the way of reducing stories to simple statements. It is an art—the art of seeing clearly—and like all arts it is often achieved only through laborious practice. If you want to investigate the truth of this for yourself, try distilling the plot of any current magazine story down to three sentences. The effort will be invaluable, particularly if repeated over and over, but it will not be easy because: (1) the analytical parts of our brains are often rusty; and (2) *we confuse incidents with plot*.

One cause for this fatal confusion is that a strong incident may bulk so large and may carry with it so many minor incidents that it takes on the appearance of a complete story. Let me illustrate: Mr. X, our protagonist, lives in a lonely cabin in the woods. A great forest fire breaks out, and to save his skin X must flee through the wall of flames. With adventure piled on adventure, this can easily be stretched out to 5000 exciting words; furthermore, there are in our outline the all-important elements of char-



"Well, that's one gag that ought to be worth something!"

acter, problem, struggle, and, implicitly, outcome. Nevertheless, despite a gripping characterization and vivid style, the finished yarn eventually comes back with an editorial notation that the plot is "too thin."

Too thin! And yet the very title of this article is "Less Plot, Please!" Is it any wonder that beginners damn all how-to-dos as either moronic or deliberately misleading?

Well, plots are as simple as I have said, but they do consist of more than situations, and X's forest fire, however terrific, is nothing but an incident. The point to grasp is this: mere struggle isn't enough to insure dramatic conflict. The struggle must be *complicated* by a new and entirely unexpected series of incidents and not just by different manifestations of the *same* incident.

Perhaps an illustration will clear up this involved statement. Our same Mr. X kills Y in the lonely cabin and starts the forest fire in hopes of destroying all evidence of the crime. X is almost trapped by the flames himself but after an exciting struggle breaks clear, only to stumble on a group of rangers who commandeer his services and force him to return to the cabin and battle the flames that threaten it. X, trembling and trapped—oh, well, you devise an ending for yourself, but don't spend more than a sentence doing it.

Meanwhile, notice this: although the fire is still an integral part of the yarn and although the story will collapse without it, the conflagration is no longer the whole plot. Instead, it has been reduced to its proper place as a complicating situation or incident. Also, though X's problem remains basically the same (saving his skin), his struggle is now intensified by a completely new and unexpected element—the rangers. Such, briefly, is the difference between mistakenly using a situation as a *whole* plot and correctly using it as *part* of a plot. Furthermore, putting your plot into rudimentary form will help you determine whether your struggle is a true complication or is merely an extended incident.

Caution must be taken in the use of complications, however. If ill-conceived, they may lead to rambling subplots, and this must be avoided. As an example: Our hero, A, in order to solve his problem of lifting the mortgage from the old homestead, starts for a job in the big city. He is stopped along the way by the necessity of extricating his grandmother from

a flooded stream (struggle); this done, he falls in with a circus whose glitter leads him far afield, but (character struggle) he breaks away and, heading cityward again, bums a ride on a highjacker's truck full of black-market meat. Not knowing the true facts he does yeoman service in driving the truck over stormy mountains (more struggle); then, arriving at a city warehouse, he discovers the evil nature of the enterprise, fights a rousing fight, summons the constabulary, breaks the gang, and is fortuitously rewarded with a sum sufficient to lift the mortgage.

Well, what's the matter with it? The problem is there, and the struggle deals with several complications. Indeed, it deals with too many. Such a loosely strung picket-fence of adventure might possibly make a novel (witness those classics, "Don Quixote" and "Tom Jones"), but it will not make a short story, which must be tightly knit with every part relevant to every other part. Notice how much of the above synopsis (disregarding here its patent absurdities) could be cut without altering the basic elements of the story. Notice, too, that these excesses become readily apparent when an effort is made to reduce the plot to a few terse sentences. It is always so: superfluous material floats into sight at every distillation.

Unrelated incidents bring up the matter of narrative hooks, another stumbling block in the path of beginning writers. The short story indeed must have an "emphatic" beginning, particularly in these days when paper shortages and limited space are curtailing lengths. And so editors and teachers pull out every stop in the organ with demands for "starting with a bang." But a fast opening does not mean that the writer should use violence merely to capture attention. After all, violence is easy to devise; anyone can plunge forthright into a bloody fight, a lovers' quarrel, or a storm at sea. However, making the fight, the quarrel, or the storm an integral part of the story is something else again, because sooner or later you will have to explain all that violence by means of a flashback. And then, in the flashback, you will realize how much forward motion you have wasted with your speed, for the less relevant the beginning, the more involved and pedestrian the explanations will be.

Moreover, the narrative hook which does not really fit the plot will, by its very failure to fit, ignore the factors of proper motivation and of a prompt introduction of the hero's problem. I haven't space here to discuss these matters (motivation and problem), but never forget that *they must develop clearly and rapidly in the opening scenes*. If your narrative hook, no matter how vigorous it may be, retards motivation and introduction of problem, then into the wastebasket the hook must go. Reducing your plot to simple sentences will soon reveal whether the opening is integral or whether it was tacked on in the hope that the tail would wag the dog.

Characterizations also lead sometimes to excesses. The writer intends, for example, a tale about a mean old banker who is actually tender at heart; so, to prove inherent benevolence, he introduces a subplot which, harking back to the banker's youth, portrays the man's native generosity before ambition hardened his crust. This device criticized, the indignant author wails, "But it characterizes my hero, doesn't it?" To be sure—but it does not characterize him in direct reference to the plot immediately in hand.

More examples could be adduced from every phase of fiction fabrication, but by now the import should be clear. If the aim of a short story is—to quote Clayton Hamilton's definition—"to promote a single narrative effect with the greatest economy of means

that is consistent with utmost emphasis," then the writer should not slave and toil to drag in more and more plot threads, hoping thereby to startle the editor, delight the reader, and cry "Open, Sesame!" to the publisher's checkbook. Rather, he should do the contrary; he should prune and cut as much as he can and still have a plot (as contrasted to a situation). And if he carries this process to its ultimate end, he will discover afresh the truth of the statement that fundamental dramatic patterns are both simple and few.

This raises an ugly question: Are short stories, then, as mechanical as some critics say? Are they everlastingly tailored to a formula? If so, what becomes of originality, of talent, even of genius?

For an answer look at the most common of all dramatic situations: boy meets girl; boy, threatened with losing girl, struggles to regain her. Or, to put it another way, a girl has two suitors. To complicate matters, she loves one of the suitors, but her parents, hating the boy's family, try to force the other suitor onto her. Shakespeare used that plot (already old in his day) with considerable success in "Romeo and Juliet," although his ending was tragic. The same plot, with a happy ending, appears every month in the women's magazines, famed for their long purses. No, you can't measure either originality or talent by plot alone.

Hark back to our analogy between a plot and a human skeleton. Remember the variety of people, good and bad, who have marched so many different paths on exactly similar bones. Now carry the analogy farther. If a plot is the skeleton of a story, then the incidents are its flesh and blood. But what ignorant anatomists we sometimes are! We clumsily link two frames into freak Siamese twins; we leave out brains or heart; we put a leg where an ear ought to be. We do this, I think, because we are too intent on the leg or ear. Engrossed in it, we sculpture a very beautiful one—and then slam it onto the body regardless of how it fits. We would not do this if we saw the skeleton—the few sentences of the plot—in their proper arrangement.

I grant one lack in this dissertation. I have not told how to get the original skeleton. Perhaps you begin with only a conception of character, with a complication, a theme, or with a unique setting. You haven't a complete skeleton. You have just a small segment of ribs. What next? Well, I duck that! For here occur the often heartbreaking and unassailable pangs of the author's travail. Suffice it to say that you gather together all the fundamental bones you can find, and in your efforts you undoubtedly gather too many. Stop before it is too late. Go back and discard all non-essentials. Discover the true nature of this skeleton you have created. Look closely at its hands and feet and at its poor, staring skull. What do you see in your mind's eye? And how much of what you see can you recreate in living flesh and blood?

There is the test of your talent and of your artistry. There is the answer to your qualms about originality.

Therein, too, lies the secret of this business of "slanting." The choice of your incidents, your manner of handling them, your style, your vocabulary, even your grammar will be dictated by the field toward which you are aiming. A Nevada lynching scene may fit *Thundering Western*, or it may become a penetrating piece of psychological analysis, as in Walter Clark's "The Ox-Bow Incident." The significance, so far as this article is concerned, lies in the fact that the skeletons of both yarns are very much the same. They are both sound frameworks not because of more "plot" but because of less plot, its few essential details correctly seen and correctly arranged.

And if a plot isn't thus correctly grasped in its elemental terms, a monstrosity is apt to result, and neither *Thundering Western* nor anyone else is interested in monstrosities.

□ □ □ □

BOOKS RECEIVED

WRITERS: LET'S PLOT! by Mildred I. Reid. Bruce Humphries, Inc. Cloth. 141 pp. \$2.00.

The chapters in this book which most readers will like best are perhaps several which discuss specifically the kinds of plots which editors are buying now. Miss Reid offers chapters on plots for the slicks, the love pulps, the Westerns, detectives. She takes up short-short plots (and supplies a list of 55 markets), and serial plotting. She directs the writing novice to these sources of plots, and elaborates each: themes, names or titles, newspapers, characters, locales. There are, naturally, chapters on general plotting principles.

The author, a literary critic, writes with high-spot treatment and popular style. She has a great deal of self-confidence, and uses the perpendicular pronoun freely (too freely to suit some).

SAY WHAT YOU MEAN, by John B. Opydyke. Funk & Wagnalls Co. Cloth. 701 pp. \$3.75.

Mr. Opydyke lists more than 2500 common faulty expressions, with corrective treatment for each. The book is modern and comprehensive, an authority against which most writers can check their grammar habits with profit.

□ □ □ □

Newspaperman, Hyde Park 36, Mass., Herbert A. Kenny, editor, writes, "At present we pay 50c an inch for material; 2000 words is positive tops. We pay \$10 for cartoons, \$5 for photographs, \$1 for short gags, on publication. Contributors must be working newspapermen." This publication is in newspaper tabloid form, published monthly at 10 cents.



"John is getting revenge. He bought all the latest magazines and is sending them back to the editors with rejection slips!"

THAT HISTORICAL NOVEL

... By THEODORE PRATT



Theodore Pratt

SO you're going to write an historical novel about your part of the country. The chances are that this has occurred to you or will occur to you.

It occurred to me and I wrote "The Barefoot Mailman," which tells a tale of the Eighties along the coast between Palm Beach and Miami. There were no roads in those days and the mailman trod the beach, finding it easier to walk barefoot on the giving sand. It took three days each way, and between there was little except wild jungle in which lived panthers, bears, snakes, and a few outlaw beachcombers.

My barefoot boy has done quite well for himself as a seller. The original manuscript and my author's notes were recently presented by myself and my publishers, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, to the Florida Historical Society, where they are on display at St. Augustine.

Between this event and the beginning of the work on the book in the spring of 1941, there were some blood, sweat, and tears. That's about all you get, until publication, when you tackle your first historical novel. At least it was about all I got.

I wasn't any historian, and had never taken much interest in history. I will confess that if I had known what I was getting myself into when taking on the job, I would never have tried it. (Though now, knowing the pleasant results, I wouldn't hesitate). Before that I had written eleven novels laid in contemporary times. This historical thing was something else again, and much tougher, with far greater pitfalls. But the large thing that interests me about writing is always to try something new and never repeat myself even in the face of a success—so off I went on the unknown voyage.

The inception of the idea for the book goes some years back of 1941. I first heard of the barefoot mailmen of Florida in 1934, when I went to live in Lake Worth, just south of Palm Beach. Into my notes went the idea of writing a story about them. Nothing was done about this—except for picking up various odds and ends of information from pioneers I met—until the spring of 1941. Then I wrote a short story, calling it "Mail to Miami."

When looking this over with a cold, fishy eye before sending it to my agent, I decided that the subject rated more than a short story. Here was something entirely unique in American history. Certainly it was plenty good enough for a book.

That short story is now one incident in the book—where Sylvanus Hurley, South Florida's first rascal land boomer, tries to trick Steven Pierton, the barefoot mailman, out of the envelope Steve carries containing ten 100-dollar bills. From that I developed my story and characters and knew what I wanted to do and where I would like to go.

For the ordinary contemporary novel, that's about all you need before starting to work. For Florida in the Eighties, I became aware that I was just beginning to get my material together. I needed background—what the land was like in those days, what

people wore, ate, and said, what sea inlets were in existence, what kinds of boats and houses were built, etc.

I spent most of the following year running down this information. It was probably harder to get than material on subjects around your locality. Florida of that time was as primitive as any place in the country. Both Palm Beach and Miami consisted mostly of a few thatched houses on the beach. Up and down the coast there were few records made and fewer saved.

Formal location of material consisted of visiting every public library from Coconut Grove, south of Miami, to Jacksonville, 400 miles north. In most of these institutions there was close to nothing on my subject. In several there was quite a good deal. All librarians were most helpful—or regretful. I had to go farther than Florida to obtain everything needed, to the New York Public Library. The most promising source turned up nothing at all—in the Washington, D. C., archives of the Post Office Department there is no record of the beachwalking mailmen.

Informal gathering of background consisted of talking with pioneers who lived in that time. These folk were all more than willing to serve. Individually, they were wonderful. As a group, the information offered by their frequent lack of memory and eagerness to tell tall tales anyway, was a terrific headache. Even the two fine old men I located who actually had been barefoot mailmen contradicted each other over details. From them all, I had to make a composite picture—which is the closest anyone could get to the actuality.

Even then I wasn't ready to start writing. For years I had been familiar with half a dozen short sections of the 66-mile beach along which all of my story would be laid. I realized that I had better know the whole beach. So, with a companion, I walked it—one way, thank you. It took us four days instead of three, and it nearly killed us. I had never respected the actual barefoot mailmen as much as I did in that walk. But it gave me his real feeling, and detailed knowledge of the entire route.

Dizzy and groggy, I sat down before my paper, and began that quizzical process which, after another year, became a manuscript which my publishers said they would very much like to issue.

Those are only a few highlights to show you what much be done to write that historical novel. I suppose I talked with several hundred people in all. I read 33 books carefully, pertinent parts of perhaps another 50, and endless newspaper clippings and pamphlets. I took around 50,000 words in notes, most of which of course I never used, but all of which I had ready if I had to describe something of the Eighties. It was no time, during the actual writing, to have to stop and look up the name of a patent medicine of the times—I wanted it handy.

Perhaps I've made it sound harder than it actually was. We all like to make our experiences seem tough. I can tell you it isn't easy. But it is always interesting, intensely so. And if you chance upon material that has never been touched—as I was lucky enough to find—it gives you the sense that you are a pioneer in this little historical corner and are preserving your information, even if not your literature, for posterity.

A few essential tips, before you start rolling your own, are:

Your state historical society will probably be the most single useful source to you, as it was to me. Or your local county or city society, if any.

It can't be a rush job, and don't start the actual writing until after deciding at least three times that you are ready.

Pay more attention to the spirit of the times rather than to the historical fact that it rained or didn't rain on the afternoon of June 11, 1887.

Have a close look at novels already written on your chosen subject. If they are all bad, either give up the project as being too difficult or clasp it to your bosom as a chance to do it right.

Be sure you have a subject that can have interest outside of your own locality. For instance, in the case of "The Barefoot Mailman," everybody knows what a mailman is and millions know the present-day "Gold Coast" of the Florida beach where he once

walked. If the subject has no conceivable connection with people outside your district, or isn't sufficiently unusual to interest them anyway, better leave it lay.

Avoid the obvious subjects—in the case of Florida, there are the early Spanish days, Indian times. Ponce de Leon, etc. All of these have been tried many times—and rarely done even passably well. If you are a Hervey Allen, go ahead, but otherwise—ouch!

Don't be bothered by people writing to you that you are wrong, historically. The chances are that, if you have worked honestly, you are the right one. Two months before "The Barefoot Mailman" was published, a woman wrote to me that she was sure it couldn't be historically accurate!

Bless her, for after I had calmed her down and she had read the book, she said I was a good guy. Which is another reward for writing an historical novel about your section of the country—if you're certain positive sure you have the time, and the subject can be made to be of universal interest.

NEW TWISTS TO OLD THEMES

. . . By NORMAN A. FOX

THE Lady Next Door, catching me stalking the mailman one morning, called her greetings across our yards and added: "Are you still writing those Western stories?" Since I've rapped a Royal for a living for nigh onto five years, I'd heard that song before, and I'd fully determined that the next time she warbled the ancient refrain I'd ask her if her husband, who is a taxidermist, was still stuffing birds. But there was no point in sacrificing a chance to indulge in a little exhibitionism.

"I've sold nearly two hundred Western stories," I said.

The L. N. D. sighed. "I should think you'd run out of ideas," she murmured. "Or perhaps you write the same thing over and over again."

I should have shot her, but I didn't. Maybe she was too close to the truth. Maybe most of us who specialize in one type of fiction evolve a formula, consciously or subconsciously, and proceed to follow it with slavish monotony. Since there is nothing new under the sun, including story ideas, the trick of this writing trade is to give new twists to old themes. And the possibilities of diversifying the Western story by one device or another are as wide as the West itself.

When I sit down to write another Western, I try to keep it from sounding like the carbon copy of the last one by shifting the occupation of the lead character, the location of the setting, or the period in which the story transpires. Each of these devices has unlimited potentialities, and each deserves delineation.

Take characters. A Western pulpster can always rely on those old stand-bys, the cowboy, the hired gunman, the prospector, or the sheriff. A few thousand stories have been written around these salty sons, a few thousand more will undoubtedly be written, and I'll probably do my share of them. Yet there is no reason why I or any other writer should stick to a steady diet of bronzed sons of the saddle. The sunset side of the Mississippi drew all manner of men from the tamer shore. Many a gent who

never felt the burn of a lariat can, nevertheless, be worked into Western stories. For example, I've sold yarns around the following lead characters:

Doctor	Actor
Range cook	Freighter
Town-tamer	Steamboat pilot
Railroad builder	Grocer
Vigilante	Stage driver
Wagon-train scout	Railroad telegrapher
Saloon piano player	Auctioneer
Newspaper editor	Lawyer
Circuit-riding parson	Stage magician
Barber	Barbed wire salesman
Rodeo rider	Medicine show man
School teacher	Postmaster
Railroad trouble shooter	Surveyor



Norman A. Fox



"If this guy doesn't soon begin sellin', I'm gonna quit!"

And this, mind you, is merely scratching the surface. Other scribes probably have much longer lists. That prolific pulpster, Tom W. Blackburn, once showed me a lengthy roster of occupational characters which he had compiled. When Tom is ready to start pounding out another smoky saga, he has only to go down the line to find his inspiration.

To write about various occupations presents problems, of course. If you have learned the way of the genus cowboy, either through actual experience or by research, you can pour your lore into yarns and more yarns with nary a stop except to brew new plots or to clean your typewriter keys. But when you turn to stories involving lawyers, telegraphers, or postmasters, you have to find out how these gentlemen went about earning their daily bread. And you've got to have them show the tricks of their trade in your scripts.

For instance, you can't get a new kind of Western story by blandly calling your character a lawyer, dropping him in a ranch or a cowtown and proceeding to have him act just as an old stand-by character, the cowboy, for instance, would act. If he's a lawyer, let him get involved in a situation where his Blackstone proves mightier than bullets. You can still burn plenty of powder and bring in the scent of the sage and the rataplan of hoofs. And you'll have a rip-snortin' Western that hasn't been worn thin around the edges.

Sure, it takes some scheming. But you've got to work out your plots whether you're using the time-worn characters or some new ones that will give a jaded editor a spark of enthusiasm. All the boys I listed were actually in the West. They played a part in its development, and they can be made into authentic, orthodox characters. Find out about them. It will pay you.

And then there's the matter of settings. Those stock characters, the cowboy, prospector, and sheriff,

suggest stock settings: the open range, the mountains, and the cowtowns. But the West was wide, remember, and you can write countless Western stories without a single steer in 'em.

They used to run steamboats up the Missouri from St. Louis to Fort Benton, in Montana. They did boating on the Columbia, too, and on some of the rivers of the southwest. There's story background for you. And there were the stagecoach lines, and the freighting outfits, and the surveying expeditions. The fur trade had its day in the shifting panorama of empire building, and fictional facsimiles of such mountain men as Jim Bridger and Kit Carson can stalk your pages. The railroad builder, fighting off the Sioux to push steel rails toward the sunset, was as much a part of the West as was Butch Bowlegs who forked his cayuse on pay night to get to Cowtown and do his likkerin'. Or how about an Indian reservation story with the harassed agent as a hero? Have you tried a Western written around the oil fields, or one concerning a paleontologist's expedition in search of dinosaur fossils?

A diligent search for different settings will suggest varying time periods, a third device for diversifying your Westerns. A great percentage of six-gun sagas are written around an undated period which roughly corresponds to the 1870's. Yet you can write and sell modern Western stories with automobiles, radios, airplanes, and Nazi spies playing a part. The market for modern Westerns is limited, but if you put your time machine in reverse, you can back up over the span of a hundred years and find a varied market for your wares. The Santa Fe Trail was dangerous in 1846 because we were at war with Mexico. The horse-rancher came into his own in 1898 because we were at war with Spain and Uncle Sam needed cayuses for the cavalry. See what I mean?

And what about the seasons? Do they suggest a variation in your stories? Winter—two cowpokes holed up in a line shack and coming down with cabin fever. Spring—the rush and roar of calf-branding time. Summer—a rustler horde riding under a full moon, or ninety rainless days tramping on each other's heels to bring drought to a range and trouble to the ranchers. Fall—roundup time again and a need to trail a herd to market.

As you can readily see, the shifting of characters, setting, and period dovetail one with another on occasion and fall into automatic grooves. Supposing you've grown tired of your cowboy, for instance, cavortin' around a cattle ranch in the 1870's. You want to do a story about a wagon-train scout. The character naturally suggests a setting: one of the great trails that spanned the continent. You decide on the Oregon Trail and start planning plenty of grief to pile on the hero. You think of Indians and are reminded of Red Cloud's attempt to close the Oregon Trail in the days after the Civil War. Character has suggested setting which, in turn, has suggested the time period.

These things have worked for me, and I hope they'll work for you. Try them and you'll find the scope of your stories as wide as the Golden West.

□ □ □ □

GRAND MUTINY

By PHILIP MENARD

I have the artist's fault,
His temperamental quirk.
I'd rather loaf and dream
Than settle down to work.

LAWFUL PLAGIARISM

. . . By ROGER SHERMAN HOAR

THE question has been asked as to whether an author may not copy with impunity, from a copyrighted book, material which the earlier author in turn had copied from sources open to all.

Strange as it may seem, the answer is No!

In America, copyright is obtained by merely publishing the work with proper statutory notice affixed. But the copyright, thus obtained, cannot be enforced in the courts unless registered within a reasonable time after publication. The copyright, thus obtained and registered, is effective for 28 years from the date of first publication. This period may be extended for another 28 years by the author personally, or his widow, next of kin, executor, etc., by application filed during the last year of the first 28. But, except in the case of encyclopedias and similar works, extension cannot be effected by the publisher.

A negligible percentage of copyrights are ever extended. Accordingly it is certain that any book, article, or story, passes into the public domain 56 years after its first publication, and probably so after only 28 years. The Register of Copyrights, for a fee of fifty cents, will inform you as to whether any given copyright has been renewed. Full title-page information, and the exact wording of the copyright notice, should be sent to the Register with the fee.

If the registration has expired, you are free to copy ad lib, with one exception, namely that you are *not* free to copy anything which was in turn copied from some prior work on which the registration has not expired.

If the registration has *not* expired, you may still be able to copy small portions of the work, provided you give full credit for *each* portion copied. A blanket credit, listing all sources, but not stating what passage you copied from which, is probably *not* sufficient.

Too excessive quotation from any previous work is infringement, even if credit be given. As stated on page 224 of C.J.S. (to which book I shall refer later herein:)

"If so much is taken that the value of the original is sensibly diminished, or the labors of the author are substantially or to an injurious extent appropriated, that is sufficient in law to constitute a piracy."

Some books accompany their copyright notice by a statement that all copying is prohibited; but it is to be doubted that this increases the copyright rights of the proprietor. However, there is a doctrine that certain types of books (such as lawbooks, encyclopedias, etc.) are so inherently adapted to being copied, that the public may assume that it is invited to copy; the presence of a limiting notice, such as just mentioned, would have the effect of negating any such implied invitation, but should have no further effect.

This brings me finally to the main question stated at the beginning of this article. On this question, and all other questions of copyright, I refer the reader to the excellent treatise on the subject in Vol. 18 of *Corpus Juris Secundum*, which is to be found in any good public or private law library, and which, despite its name, is written in English rather than in Latin. On page 226 that treatise states:

"Perhaps the most difficult questions with regard to infringement arise where neither of the two works, one of which is claimed to be a piracy of the other, is strictly original, but where both are

based on materials which are common property. The compiler of such a book does not, by copyrighting his book, acquire a monopoly of the subject of which the book treats; any other person may select the same subject and, going to the original or public sources of information, make a similar work. The subsequent compiler must, however, investigate for himself from the original sources which are open to all, and he cannot use the labors of a previous compiler and save his own time by copying the results of the previous compiler's work, although the same results could have been obtained by independent labor. It is piracy to copy from a compilation extracts and quotations or other matter which the compiler has selected and put into his book, notwithstanding the same matter may be found in common and public sources from which the second compiler, if possessed of sufficient skill, judgment, and industry, could have selected for himself; he has no right to copy his predecessor's selections, and thereby annex the skill, judgment, and taste which dictated the selections, or save himself the labor of reading or using the original sources and making his own selections therefrom. Mere verification of copied or paraphrased matter is no justification of the literary larceny involved in its taking, as mere verification is not such bona fide resort to the original and common sources as is spoken of in the cases, and it affords no defense to a charge of infringement in the case of compilations."

The foregoing quotation can be summarized by laying down two principles: (1) you cannot legally copy source material from a prior compiler whose copyright has not expired, rather you must go to the original sources yourself; (2) and, even if you go to the original sources, it constitutes infringement for you to go to substantially the same sources as the original compiler did, and pick out substantially the same portions thereof.

And a final word of warning. Beware copying a quotation from a compiler, and then pretending you got it from the original source. Beware even getting the quotation from the earlier author, and then actually checking it against the original source. A recent copyright litigation between two loose-leaf law services, was won by the plaintiff because he was able to show that misprint after misprint in his own compilation had been duplicated in the subsequent compilation of the defendant!

In general, the criterion as to whether or not your copying from, or other reliance upon, some prior publication, amounts to an actionable infringement thereof, is: Are you lazily letting the prior author do your work for you?

□ □ □ □

Postcard of Praise

A. & J.:

Although I've read many fine articles in A. & J., this is the first time I've been driven to a postcard of praise. William Pratt's delightful and much too modest piece on his very successful versifying in your February issue is the cause of this outburst. Thanks to Mr. Pratt, I am really going to keep trying. Please let us hear from him again!

HELEN J. BOWEN.

45 Ocean Ave.,
Brooklyn 25, N. Y.

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S ANNUAL HANDY MARKET LIST OF

SYNDICATES

MAY, 1944

Information presented below has been obtained by querying the various syndicates in detail as to their requirements. Many syndicates are supplied by staff writers or other regular sources; these ordinarily cannot be considered as markets. Other syndicates will consider submitted free-lance material. The preference is for features in series; however, spot news, photos, feature articles, short-stories, and serials may be sold individually to syndicates open to such material. The method of remuneration is indicated as far as available. Some material is purchased outright; more often the arrangement is on a basis of royalty or percentage. Occasional syndicates are dilatory and unreliable in handling submissions. The Author & Journalist, of course, can assume no responsibility for the concerns here listed. Contributors are advised to send query or preliminary letter describing material to be offered, before submitting manuscripts or art. Be sure to enclose return postage or (preferably) stamped envelopes.

Acme News Pictures, Inc., 461 8th Ave., New York. (Affiliated with Scripps-Howard Newspapers.) Considers news pictures from free-lances. \$3 up. Acc. Affiliated with NEA.

Adams, (George Matthew) Service, 444 Madison Ave., New York. Syndicates all types of daily and continuing features; cartoons, comic strips. Has regular sources.

American News Features, Inc., 595 5th Ave., New York. Comic strips, feature articles, second rights to serials. Percentage basis.

Anglo News Service, 42 E. 50th St., New York. Regular sources for news features, photographs, variety of columns and fiction. Mostly from regular sources. Royalties, 50%. Louise W. White, Mng. Ed.

AP Features, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York. News, women's sports features, comics, fiction (30 chap. serials, 1000 words each), second rights. Rarely buys outside and only on query.

Associated Newspapers, 247 W. 43rd St., New York. (Affiliated with North Am. Newspaper Alliance, Bell Syndicate, and Consolidated News Features.) Not in market for free-lance material.

Authenticated News, Times Bldg., New York. (Affiliated with Central Feature News.) Rotogravure feature pages only. Considers exclusive, up-to-date photos, news pictures. Outright purchase, varying rates. Stephen K. Swift.

Authenticated News Service, Box 326, Hollywood, Calif. Motion picture, radio programs and contests, free-lance. 50% royalty. Query.

Bartlett Service, 637 Pine St., Boulder, Colo. Business features and news, all retail and service trades. Has good openings for exclusive correspondents in several large cities west of Mississippi. Applicant requested to submit samples of work. Percentage basis. M. A. Bartlett, Mng. Ed.

Bell Syndicate, Inc., 247 W. 43d St., New York. (Affiliated with the Associated Newspapers.) Not accepting contributions for the duration.

Bressler Editorial Cartoons, 130 W. 42nd St., New York. Daily editorial cartoons, usually staff prepared; buys occasionally from free-lances. Payment on acceptance according to quality.

Cambridge Associates, Inc., 163 Newbury St., Boston 16, Mass. Business and financial articles from regular sources.

Cartoon Features, 23 W. 47th St., New York. Cartoons; comics; columns; pictorial statistics. Outright purchase. First and second rights. Free-lance men are regular sources. Submit only cartoons good for serials.

Casey (Elizabeth) Cooking & Homemaking Schools, 2096 Grand Ave., St. Paul, Minn. Recipes, household hints, beauty aids and child care articles, staff prepared. None purchased.

Central Feature News Service, Times Bldg., New York. Buys exclusive news and human-interest, scientific pictures and illustrated features; inventions, discoveries, oddities. Outright purchase, 30 days.

Central Press Association, 1435 E. 12th St., Cleveland, O. Spot news pictures; feature pictures; brief news feature stories with art. Subsidiary to King Features Syndicate.

Central Press Canadian, 80 King St., Toronto, Ont., Canada. News and sport pictures and stories chiefly from regular sources. Pays \$1.50 per photo, on acceptance. R. B. Collett.

Chapman, Wm. Gerard, 100 W. Monroe St., Chicago, Ill. Fiction by established writers—query first.

Chicago Journal of Commerce, 12 E. Grand Ave., Chicago. Financial and economic charts principally from regular sources. W. L. Ayers.

Chicago Times Syndicate, 211 W. Wacker Drive, Chicago. Newspaper features; columns; cartoons; panels. All from regular sources at present. No fiction. Royalty, on contract. (Affiliated with Chicago Daily Times.) Ross Stewart, Ed.

Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate, 220 E. 42nd St., New York. General features. Buys first rights to serials, short stories (Blue Ribbon Fiction); feature articles, news features, scientific materials, columns, cartoons, comic strips. Outright purchase. Payment on acceptance.

Collyer's News Bureau, 300 W. Adams St., Chicago. Considers sports features, photos. \$5.00 a column. Acc. Lally Collyer, Gen. Mgr.

Columbia News Service, 60 E. 42nd St., New York. All features staff-written. Picture material wanted—news, semi-news, legs, collegiate roto and collegiate leg series, science, etc. Singles and series, \$2 to \$10 per picture. Stanley P. Silbey.

Connecticut News Association, 83 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport, Conn. News features, market and financial reports, staff prepared or assigned to regular contributors.

Consolidated News Features, Inc., 247 W. 43d St., New York. (Affiliated with North American Newspaper Alliance, Associ-

ated Newspapers, Bell Syndicate.) Not in the market for duration. Kathleen Caesar.

Continental Feature Syndicate, P. O. Box 326, Hollywood, Calif. Astrology and kindred subjects, chiefly from regular sources but some free-lance. Query first. Easton West.

Crutcher (Carlile) Syndicate, 300 W. Liberty St., Louisville 2, Ky. Newspaper features, strips, columns, panels. Royalty basis.

Crux News Service, 473 Grand Ave., Leonia, N. J. (Historical and political features; considers "The Unknown in History," 600 words. Outright purchase, current rates.

Daily Sports News Service, 820 Park Ave., Brooklyn 6, N. Y. Sports and sport features. Feature articles, sports news features and columns. First and second rights, serials and short stories, varied lengths. Staff and free-lance material. Payment at varying rates on acceptance. 25c reading fee on all Mss.

Dench Business Features, Ho-Ho-Kus, N. J. Material on general subjects, staff-written. Considers only professional photos of striking window and interior displays. Royalties, 50% of gross receipts. Ernest A. Dench.

Devil Dog Syndicate, 820 Park Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. Uses both staff and free-lance material. Sports, motion picture plots, news, shorts, serials, news photos, cartoons, comic strips, serials and short stories, first and second rights. Outright purchase on acceptance, varying rates; also royalty basis. Contributors must enclose 25c handling fee, and stamped envelope for return.

Dominion News Bureau, Ltd., 455 Craig St., W., Montreal, Canada. Represents U. S. syndicates in Canada. Handles limited amount of material from Canada free-lances.

Elliott Service Co., Inc., 217 E. 44th St., New York. Considers news pictures, scientific subjects; photos of auto accidents, fires, industrial and manufacturing plants, safety work, mining. Buys outright for news photo displays—does not syndicate for resale. Material need not be exclusive. \$2 up, payment on acceptance. A. L. Lubatty.

Exclusive Features Syndicate, 900 Statler Bldg., Boston, Mass. Fact stories. Regular and free-lance sources. Nutritional research material. Percentage, by arrangement.

Feature News Service, 229 W. 43rd St., New York. (Affiliated with N. Y. Times.) Uses no outside material. John Van Bibber.

Galloway (Ewing), 420 Lexington Ave., New York. Serves publishers, advertising agencies, with photos of nearly everything on earth excepting purely ephemeral pictures (hot news today, old stuff tomorrow). Buys everything offered that seems to have a profitable outlet. Real test is good photography, plus subject matter with considerable audience. Prefers original negatives. No miniature film. Usual rates, \$5 up; prefers \$10 quality. Will buy one or 1000 at a time.

General Features Syndicate, Inc., 545 5th Ave., New York. Comics, jokes, news features, advertising ideas for syndication; odd true stories. Outright purchase or 50% royalty. Send type-written duplicate; keep original. Peter Van Thein.

Globe Photos, 33 W. 42nd St., New York. Interested in sets of photographs in continuity form. No single shots. Features should average 10 to 30 photos. First rights. 50% royalties on gross sales, check and statement 20th of the month following sales. L. M. Ufland, Mng. Ed.

Graves (Ralph H.) Syndicate, 381 4th Ave., New York. Published novels only; first and second rights. 50% royalties on gross sales. Rarely considers free-lance work.

Handy Filler Service, 1712 Russ Bldg., San Francisco. News and semi-news, all staff-written.

Harris-Ewing Photo News Service, 17 E. 42nd St., New York. News photos. Royalty basis.

Haskin Service, 316 Eye St., NE, Washington, D. C. All material staff-written.

Heath News Service, 1300 Nat'l Press Bldg., Washington, D. C. Buying nothing now. Only filling specific orders.

Heintz Radio News Service, 2400 California St., Washington, D. C. Radio news having to do with legislation, staff-prepared.

Hodges, J. M. J., 22 E. Preston St., Baltimore, Md. Personally conducted syndicate of inspirational editorials. No market.

Hollywood Press Syndicate, 6605 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, Calif. Supplies newspapers, etc., in all parts of world except United States and Canada. Can use fact adventure, illustrated interviews with prominent persons, news and feature photographs. 50-50 percentage. Jos. B. Polonsky, Mgr.

Holmes Feature Service, 135 Garrison Ave., Jersey City, N. J. Mostly regular sources; buys some from free-lances. Scientific and general feature articles, news features, news photos. Outright purchase or 50% royalties.

Hope, Chester, Features, 345 West 86th St., New York 24. Chiefly Sunday Magazine Section feature articles from regular staff.

Independent Features Syndicate, 56 W. 45th St., New York. Features, news, news photos, from regular sources. Varying rates, outright purchase or percentage basis.

International Labor News Service, 509 Carpenters Bldg., Washington, D. C. Labor news, feature articles from regular sources.

International Religious News Service, Rushsylvania, O. Religious news features, from regular sources. No MSS wanted at present.

Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 106 E. 41st St., New York 17. Staff columnists; buys occasional feature articles of Jewish interest, \$5 to \$10 per article, 1000-2000 words. B. Smolar.

Jordan Syndicate, 1210 G St., N.W., Washington, D. C. Considers feature photos for magazines and photo sections. Query on natural color photos, \$3 up, or 50-50 royalties.

Keystone Press Features Service, Ltd., 2 W. 46th St., New York 19. Syndicates comics and news photos only for duration. Percentage basis. Wm. A. Spilo, Mng. Ed.

Keystone View Co., 219 E. 44th St., New York. Material 70% staff-prepared. Considers good quality photos, geographic, scenic, children, home scenes, farm scenes, etc.; common everyday life pictures. Outright purchase or 50-50 percentage basis. E. P. Van Loon.

King Editors Features, 102 Hillyer St., East Orange, N. J. Considers articles of interest to retailers generally in series (2 to 12). 800-1500 words each. Royalties.

King Features Syndicate, Inc., 235 E. 45th St., New York. Considers first or second rights to serials, first rights to short stories; feature articles, news features, scientific and specialized material, work of columnists, comic art, cartoons, crossword puzzles. Payment on publication, percentage basis.

Ledger Syndicate, 205-07 S. Juniper St., Philadelphia. General syndicate; columns, women's articles, comics. No serials at present. "Some free-lance when in market." Royalty basis. Considers first rights to 60,000-word, 36-chapter serials. Comic strips. 50% royalties.

Markey (Frank Jay) Syndicate, 369 Lexington Ave., New York. Feature articles; news features; columns; cartoons; comic strips. Regular sources. Generally 50-50 percentage.

Matz Feature Syndicate, 523 Weiser St., Reading, Pa. Scientific subjects, screen, aviation articles, news pictures, comic strips. Usual rates, Pub. Ralph S. Matz. (Slow reports.)

McClure Newspaper Syndicate, 75 West St., New York. Buys rights to short-stories, 900-1000 words. \$5. Pub. A. P. Waldo, Ed.

McNaught Syndicate, Inc., 60 E. 42nd St., New York 17. Material usually obtained from regular sources, occasionally from free-lance contributors. Considers cartoons, columns, comic strips. Royalty basis. No set rate.

Metropolitan News Service, 83 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport, Conn. News and features from regular sources.

Millans Newspaper Service, 1775 Davidson Ave., Bronx, N. Y. Editorial cartoons, sports cartoons, and a comic; also, poems, contributed by staff.

Miller Newspaper Syndicate, 1717 So. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee, Wis. Feature articles of American national interest to average newspaper feature readers, 1000-2000. 50-50 royalty, usually averaging 2 cents a word. Does not want fiction; stocked up on cartoons.

Moore Service, Box 178, North Salem, Ind. Technical trades reports, all specially gathered and analyzed.

Movietone News, 460 W. 54th St., New York. News pictures and news photos, some purchased from free-lance contributors. Outright purchase, \$5 and up, Acc.

Morgan, Ralph, Newspictures, 1180 Raymond Blvd., Newark, N. J. News photos, all kinds, some obtained from free-lances. Desires Northern New Jersey people at resorts, etc. Payment, \$2 up.

National Newspaper Service, Inc., 326 W. Madison St., Chicago. Will consider continuing features that can be run daily year after year; humor preferred. Columns. Comic strips. Percentage basis.

NEA Service, 1200 W. 3rd St., Cleveland, Ohio. Pictures, articles, comics, and columns; staff written and free-lance. Serials to 30,000; short stories and short-stories. Flat rates, outright purchase, Acc.

Newspaper Boys of America, Inc., 222 E. Ohio St., Indianapolis, Ind. Considers circulation promotion ideas. Payment on publication.

Newspaper Features, Inc., 308-10 Wm. Oliver Bldg., Atlanta, Ga. Regular sources; not in the market for outside work. J. C. Wilson.

Newspaper Sports Service, 15 Park Row, New York 7. Sports news and sports features; also motion picture plots. Regular and free-lance. Cartoons, Serials, short stories and short-stories, first and second rights. Outright purchase, Acc. Charges reading fee of 50c on each Ms. submitted.

New York Herald-Tribune Syndicate, 230 W. 41st St., New York. Syndicates Herald-Tribune features; occasionally buys from free-lances. Columns, comics, 50-50 percentage basis.

North American Newspaper Alliance, 247 W. 43d St., New York. News features by wire, some from free-lance contributors. Outright purchase, Pub.

Northwest Syndicate, Inc., 711 St. Helens Ave., Tacoma, Wash. (Affiliated with the Tacoma News Tribune.) Cartoons and comic strips, on royalty basis.

N. Y. Post Syndicate, 75 West St., New York. No free-lance material is purchased.

Our Family Food, 468 Fourth Ave., New York. Good material, all staff-written.

Overseas News Agency, 101 Park Ave., New York 17. News features, articles, columns and cartoons; second rights. Outright purchase, Pub.

Overseas Press, Inc., 11 W. 42nd St., New York 18. Feature articles and news pictures syndicated to U. S. and Canadian magazines of national circulation, from both regular sources and free-lance contributors; also, serials and short stories, first and second rights. Outright purchase, payment on acceptance.

Pan American Press Service, 1210 G St., N.W., Washington, D. C. Photos and features likely to interest Latin America, from regular and free-lance sources. Kodachromes, Royalty, 50% of gross sales.

Pan-Hellenic American Foreign Press Syndicate, 1215-17 Park Row Bldg., New York. Religious service.

Park Row News Service, 280 Broadway, New York. News and features, staff-written. Theodore Kaufman.

Patterson, David S., 1500 3rd Ave., New Brighton, Pa. Editorials and paragraphs self-written. No market.

Paul's Photos, 537 S. Dearborn St., Chicago. Nature and human interest photographs of pictorial value or advertising appeal; photos of new inventions, of children in various activities, children at play, action farm scenes, pictures of special occasions, such as Christmas; strange sights and customs in foreign lands; pictures taken by members of our armed forces in the war. 1/3 commission. Also buys glossy prints, 5x7 or larger, at \$1 and up per print.

Peerless Fashion Service, Inc., 121 W. 19th St., New York. Fashion articles and pictures. Payment at market price.

Phoenix Republic & Gazette Syndicate, P. O. Box 1950, Phoenix, Ariz. Cartoons from own publications; no outside material.

Pictorial Press—Pan America, 1658 Broadway, New York. Pictorial features, either outright purchase or 50% royalty. 6x8 prints preferred.

Pictorial Publishing Co., 19 W. 44th St., New York. Photos, short feature articles, 2000-4000. Picture series of nearly every type. S. A., English, Swiss outlets. Royalty percentage.

Press Alliance, Inc., 235 E. 45th St., New York. Feature articles, cartoons, news features, news photos, purchased from free-lances. 50% royalty.

Press Photo Service, Wolverine Hotel, Detroit, Mich. Photos, A-1 technically and in respect to news value, from Michigan only. Outright purchase. \$5 minimum. C. W. McGill, Ed.

Publishers Syndicate, 30 N. La Salle St., Chicago. Considers cartoons, columns, comic strips. Royalties or percentage. Harold H. Anderson, or E. P. Conley.

Rapid Grip and Batten, Ltd., 181 Richmond St., W., Toronto, Canada. News photos; comic strips, panels, pages and general newspaper features.

Register & Tribune Syndicate, Des Moines, Ia. First rights to serials, 36 chapters, 1200-1500 wds. each; comic strips. No single articles. Royalties. Henry P. Martin, Jr.

Religious News Service, 381 Fourth Ave., New York. Issued by National Conference of Jews and Christians. Significant, timely religious news stories, religious features, religious spot news, short stories presenting Christian-Jewish relationships. 1c. Pub. Mostly from regular sources.

Russell Service, 254 Fern St., Hartford, Conn. Articles and columns on automobiles and motoring, all staff-prepared.

Science Service, Inc., 1719 N St., N. W., Washington, D. C. Science feature articles, news photos. Considers some free-lance material. Payment on acceptance. 1c a word average. Watson Davis.

Sports Record Query Syndicate, Box 215, Long Beach, Calif. Sports page material from regular sources only.

Star Newspaper Service, 80 King St., W., Toronto, Ontario, Canada. (Syndicate department of the Toronto Star.) All types of material with British or Canadian angle, chiefly from regular sources. First rights to serials 30,000 words; short-stories, 1,000 words; news features and pictures. Avoid Americanisms. Royalties, 50%. F. P. Hotson.

Summer's Syndicate, Box 587, Poland, Ohio. Don Summers. Trade magazine field. Writers are asked to contribute to promotion expense.

Swiftnews, Times Bldg., New York. Illustrated news features; scientific and candid camera series; micrographs; outstanding news features for rotogravure pages. Outright purchase, varying rates. Stephen K. Swift.

Syndicate Press Association, 156 Holiday Ave. N. E., Atlanta, Ga. Oddities; cartoons; considers 2nd rights on small booklets. Mostly royalty.

Thompson Service, 255 Senator Pl., Clifton, Cincinnati, O. Features, cartoons, comic strips, scientific material. 50-50 commission.

Three Lions, 551 5th Ave., New York 17. News pictures and picture-stories from free-lance writers. Outright purchase or 50-50 royalty.

Trans-Canada News Service, 5019 Coalbrook Ave., Montreal, P. Q. Syndicates feature articles either in series or singly. Free-lance contributions welcome. Purchases outright, paying on pub.; or 50-50 royalty basis. No photos invited without querying.

Transradio News Features, Inc., 521 5th Ave., New York 17. An active market for new and original feature material for newspaper publication, to 750 words, with preference for ideas of 200 to 300 words. No limits on subject-matter. No comic strips, illustrations, or photos. Outright purchase or royalty. Herbert Moore, Pres.; Dixon Stewart, Ed.

TYP, News Syndicate, 225 W. 113th St., New York. (Affiliated with Calvin's Newspaper Service.) News, mats, features, photos, columns, syndicated articles. No free-lance material. Ted Yates, director.

United Features Syndicate, Inc., 220 E. 42nd St., New York. (Affiliated with United Press.) Considers love serials, occasionally romantic adventure or mystery, 36 installments, 1200-1500 words each. Payment \$150 each. Non-fiction material usually from regular sources; considers distinctive ideas for continuous features, columns, cartoons, comic strips, etc. No separate features. Frances Rule, Fiction Ed.

Universal Trade Press Syndicate, 724 5th Ave., New York 17. News agency covering business papers; inquire for staff vacancies. Outright purchase, percentage 60%-75%. M. S. Blumenthal.

Vitamin News Bureau, 900 Statler Bldg., Boston 16, Mass. Specialized material on vitamins, nutrition, public health, from regular and free-lance sources. Vitamin features especially desired. Percentage, by arrangement.

Watkins Syndicate, Inc., 2738 Merwood Lane, Ardmore, Pa. Serials, first and second rights; comic strips; features by or about personages of international fame; 50-50. Query in advance.

Wide World Photos, Inc., 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20. (Division of Associated Press.) Needs photos in print form. Outright purchase, \$3-\$5.

Woehle News Service, 153 Centre St., New York. Local coverage in N. Y. C. for out-of-town newspapers, from regular sources. Alexander J. Woehle.

The following syndicates, our information indicates, are not handling free-lance material:
W. Clarence Adams, Jonesboro, Ark.; Burton (Lucille) Fea-

tures, San Francisco; Byers (Calvin A.), Bellville, Ohio; Consolidated News Service, Orange, N. J.; Detrick (Betty) Features, Los Angeles; Doherty (Ray) Syndicate, San Francisco; Doubleday-Doran Syndicate, New York; Dudgeon Feature Service, Detroit; Editorial Research Reports, Washington, D. C.; Editors Press Service, Inc., New York; Hopkins Syndicate, Inc., Chicago; Independent Syndicate, Washington, D. C.; Intercity News Service, New York; Judy (Will) Syndicate, Chicago; Lukens (Donley), Guilford, Conn.; Make-Your-Own-Craft Syndicate, New York; Penn Feature Syndicate, Philadelphia; Phoenix Republican and Gazette Syndicate, Phoenix, Ariz.; Press Features Association, New York; Publishers Financial Bureau, Babson Park, Mass.; Recipe Service Co., Philadelphia; Sap and Salt, Rushville, Ind.; Secretary Hawkins Service, Cincinnati; Southern News Service, Birmingham, Ala.; Standard Press Assn., Boston, Mass.; Star Features Syndicate, Alhambra, Calif.; Technical News Service, Washington, D. C.; Tewson Syndicate, New York; Trumbull's Society News, Bridgeport, Conn.; United Press Association, New York; Vanguard Features Syndicate, Chicago; Wells, W. Worthington, Leoma, N. J.; Western Newspaper Union, Chicago; World Color Printing Co., St. Louis, Mo.; Worldover Press, Wilton, Conn.

BEGINNER'S PRIORITY

. . . By E. H. MORRISON

WITH priorities on this and priorities on that where does the beginning writer come in? Just here—there is a certain atmosphere or background of experience in every life over which the individual has supreme and entire priority! This source of personal experience is his, and his alone, to be utilized in his first feeble efforts as a writer, and should be his sign-post pointing the way to take.

Like many another beginning writer I was given the usual advice. "You must crash the pulps first." So I tried and tried and tried again, and all the time my inner self rebelled and every line I wrote was an effort. I simply couldn't do it! Because—my whole background and atmosphere of life were wrong for that type of writing.

I was ready to give up when I decided to try utilizing the things I knew, using the background with which I was familiar. (In my case this happened to be the religious background but I'm sure any other would work just as well.) So I wrote a simple little play with a religious theme, called "Oil For The Lamps of God," which was accepted for publication on its first trip out, by *Woman's Missionary Union* of The Southern Baptist Convention, Birmingham, Ala. The check was not large, of course, but as much as the pulp markets would have paid for the same amount of work, and so much easier for me!

Then I began to look around me in earnest.

For several years I had helped teach children in Daily Vacation Bible Schools and I noticed that the children always enjoyed the lessons about truth, honesty, etc. so much more when the lesson was given in story form. This gave me the idea of trying to write some children's stories.

My first effort was an animal-pet story for tiny tots called "Bobo Comes to Stay," which sold to *Wee Wisdom*, Kansas City, Mo. Again the check was not large (\$7) but the story was only about 700 words, so again the rate of payment was equal to that of many of the pulps, for the amount of work done.

Another time I was called upon to teach a class of junior-age boys—to teach a lesson of faith and courage. Now boys of this age are quite hep to the question of the reality of ghosts but all of them love ghost stories, so I got the idea of tying up the lesson on courage with a ghost story. I actually used a passage of Scripture as the basic idea for a story entitled "The Ghost Walks." This story was accepted by the Nazarene Publishing House, Kansas City, Mo.

What Sunday School teacher or religious worker has not had problems with boys and girls of adolescent age—the Intermediates in the Sunday School? After working with them for awhile, a leader has ample material for a book of opening exercises for the Intermediate Department of the Sunday School, for a book on parties, for articles on the problems of adolescents, etc. Religious publishing houses are always looking for this type of material.

The discussions and problems which arise in a business girls' class or a young men's class will provide ample material for short devotionals which, when well written, are gladly received by the various young people's periodicals.

What better source could one find for real, live entertaining fiction than in the real life situations which confront every worker with young people today? The separations caused by young people going into the service of our country, the disappointment of some who are unable to go, the delayed marriages and other difficulties due to the war are real problems which furnish good ideas for stories.

Then how about the pastor's sermons? (You see I'm still talking about a religious background.) If one goes to church for something besides a nap in the pew he may catch a striking phrase or statement which will serve as a "starter" for an acrostic, a pantomime, a pageant, or a play. Example: A sermon on "The Good Samaritan" gave the idea for a play depicting the thought of social service or neighborliness, and this play under the title "In-as-much" was accepted by the same publishing house that used the first play mentioned. Stewardship and missionary plays are constantly in demand by the denominational publishing houses and I often get an idea or even the title for a play, while listening to a sermon.

Because of my religious background I can write such material easily and quickly without having to spend a lot of time gathering information, I understand the rather rigid taboos of this particular field, and I am able to use the correct terminology.

Another advantage is that I am familiar with the religious markets and am not likely to send a contribution to a market for which it is unsuited.

Any person's writing will naturally be more vital and alive when he writes from the background of his experiences from day to day, and from the things in which he is interested. So I should like to urge every beginning writer to try writing about the every-day things around him; to Stop-Look-Listen, and then take advantage of his *priority on experience*.

THE STUDENT WRITER

CONDUCTED BY WILLARD E. HAWKINS

LXII—THE DETECTIVE STORY FIELD—ITS LIMITATIONS

IT may appear superfluous to define a term which in itself is a definition. Nevertheless, for the record, suppose we start with the observation that a detective story, as understood in modern parlance, is a yarn in which the perpetrator of a crime is discovered through methods of detection. Any person who solves, or tries to solve, a problem involving crime thereby becomes, so to speak, a detective, and his or her activities evolve a detective story.

Our definition is not quite as obvious as might appear, however, since representatives of one large group in the modern field—the pulp detective-story magazines—do not adhere to it. They construe the term much more broadly. For their purposes, practically any yarn involving crime or criminals becomes a detective story. It is not detection but *crime* that forms the common denominator of their stories.

Actually, this eliminates one possible variety of detective yarn. The ingenuity and resourcefulness of a detective could just as logically be directed toward running down the perpetrator of beneficent or harmless deeds as toward exposing some one of criminal intent. By way of illustration: A deserving person might receive an anonymous gift of great value, whereupon he or she or some other person in the role of detective might interest himself in discovering the reason for the gift and the identity of the giver.

This certainly is entitled to be called a detective story. However, it would not fit the conventional idea or find a place in periodicals devoted to detective fiction. (Unless the apparently benevolent action turned out to have sinister implications, which, of course, would bring it back into the category of crime.)

There are, unquestionably, certain well-defined formulas for stories in this detective—or crime—field. Nevertheless, the formulas are not arbitrarily imposed upon authors. In no field are originality of plot and method more welcomed. The formulas result neither from reader demand nor editorial rigidity, but from the limitations of the subject-matter. There seem to be just so many possible developments for stories involving crime. Happy indeed is the author who hits upon a recognizable variation.

Generally speaking, writers employ the tried-and-proved formulas, relying upon novelty of details and characterization to give their stories originality.

While these favorite formulas will be discussed in detail, our purpose, it must be emphasized, is not to present them as models to be slavishly followed. Of necessity, the stories turned out by aspiring detective-story writers probably will fall into one or another of these general patterns. Nevertheless, the more variety achieved in their use—in fact, the more widely they are departed from—the better chance there is of success.

Regarding the limitations of our material, consider the following:

The general subject is crime. This is the only arbitrary limitation, but immediately it limits us as to characters.

Two of them are essential. We must have a *criminal*, one who commits a crime, and a *victim*, one against whom it is committed.

A third character is essential in many cases—a *detective*; one who brings the criminal to justice or somehow avenges the crime.

We may also have *accomplices*, *innocent suspects*, and, of less importance, such incidental characters as *co-victims* (relatives, friends, dependents, associates of the victim), *secondary detectives* (either assisting or hampering the detective), *witnesses*, and still others.

It is understood, of course, that this refers to the types of characters, not their actual number. We may have more than one criminal, several victims, two or more detectives. These possibilities help to give variety in details, but not in basic structure. The characters do not actually have to be persons; they can be animals, and it is possible to conceive of them as inanimate objects, or forces of nature.

So far as characters are concerned, then, we must work out our yarns with combinations of the few named. Given a fairly complete list—say one criminal, one victim, one detective, three suspects—what can we hope to achieve in the way of basic variety?

1. The criminal must perpetrate, or attempt to perpetrate his crime upon the victim. No choice here. He hasn't the alternative of not attempting it, because such non-action would wipe out both characters at one fell swoop. No crime—no criminal, no victim.

2. The detective must attempt to solve the crime. Here we have a choice between two possible variations. Either he solves it and brings the criminal to justice, or he doesn't.

3. In the course of this procedure, suspicion is thrown upon one after another of the suspects. Since they turn out to be innocent, they do not actually affect the trend of development. So far as the basic formula is concerned, they merely serve to confuse the reader—or at best as obstacles to the solution.

This is not to say that suspects are unimportant in detective-story development. Quite the contrary. Only when we consider in a broad sense the possible variations in development of the story, do they appear not to count.

Very well. Our broad outline of struggle between criminal and detective allows two obvious variations—either the criminal or the detective wins. Is this all?

Not quite; for the detective's problem is likely to be two-fold. Usually his first task is to find out who the criminal is. His second is to bring the criminal to justice. He may succeed in one and fail in the other. That is, he may learn the identity of the criminal, but fail to catch him or bring him to justice. And, theoretically, he might bring the criminal to justice without learning his identity.

Beyond this, we might further subdivide the possibilities. For example, the detective usually is faced with the task not only of discovering who committed the crime, but how and why. However, when we come to motives and methods, and to the nature of the crime, we are considering details. It is in these and other details of development that infinite variety and originality become possible. They are not limit-

ing factors, but the contrary. Our limiting factors—the confines within which the detective story must develop—are the three previously mentioned. A crime having been committed, or attempted, the struggle between criminal and detective resolves itself into (1) success for the detective, or (2) success for the criminal, or (3) partial success for the detective and partial success for the criminal.

What if we assume some different combination of characters? Well, we have already assumed the maximum combination—criminal, victim, detective, and suspects. Since the latter do not affect the broad formula (nor would accomplices, co-victims, or other incidental characters), it appears that the maximum combination is three—criminal, victim, and detective. We can depart from this only by eliminating the detective—leaving criminal and victim. How many variations does this permit?

Eliminating the detective narrows down the struggle to a conflict between criminal and victim. The former attempts to perpetrate a crime. Either (1) he succeeds, or (2) he fails, being thwarted by the intended victim or circumstances, or (3) he succeeds in part and fails in part.

While the latter possibility might seem at first to be merely theoretical, actually it accounts for a vast number of crime stories. Its best example is the "perfect crime" type, in which the criminal perpetrates his crime successfully but brings about his own retribution through some neglected detail—or perhaps through the proddings of conscience.

With this brief review of the limitations of the field, we should be equipped to analyze in some detail the specific formulas, currently acceptable, for detective and crime fiction.

PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

1. Read and synopsise a number of detective and crime stories. Suggest into which of the broad classifications discussed in this installment each example falls. Do you find any which fall clearly outside of these classifications?

2. Can you conceive of a crime story without a criminal? Without a victim?

3. Devise brief plot outlines illustrating each of the alternative developments suggested in this lesson: Struggle between criminal and detective resulting in (1) success for the criminal; (2) success for the detective; (3) partial success for each; struggle between victim and criminal resulting in (1) success for the victim; (2) success for the criminal; (3) partial success and partial failure for the criminal.

□ □ □ □

OUT OF BREATH

By WILLIAM W. PRATT

"Go out and live," his critics said;

"The words you write are too naive.

"Go paint the world a crimson red,

"And wear your heart upon your sleeve."

He gladly followed their advice

And sang his songs and spent his dough,

And played at every minor vice,

And learned the things he had to know.

He dined and danced and paid the check;

He noted what he saw and heard,

And now the fellow is a wreck

And never writes a single word.

SOLD—500 COPIES IN 1 HOUR

By BEATRICE E. REESE

ONE Wednesday afternoon some months ago I opened my mail to find two poems that I had sent to a well-known radio and magazine poetry editor. Across the bottom of one was scrawled in pencil, "I like this but how can I accept them all when I receive 2000 a week?"

Those words inspired a new hope and I suddenly decided to try my own hand at publication. My decision was backed not with cash, but with the *will* to find the *way* to my desired goal.

Deciding that my booklet of verse must be small, I selected six short poems and typed them neatly onto a 4¼ by 5¼-inch sample form of 12 pages. Opposite each poem I wrote a few words of comment.

But, to publish just another book of verse—no. I chose to use poetry in a new way to convey congratulatory messages for birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, etc. I called the presentation a Greeting Card Booklet.

The cover, designed with a blank space to be filled in by the purchaser, was printed in red and blue and stated simply, "A BOOK OF POEMS AND BEST WISHES, for your (———)." Inside was a loose sheet with suggestions for the many occasions on which the booklet could be used.

A local union shop agreed to print the booklets and promised to have 500 of them ready by 4:00 p. m. on the following Monday.

Immediately I called at our largest five-and-ten-cent store. The manager liked the idea and ordered 200 copies. Next I called on a book store, a stationery store, and a variety store. Since I was not acquainted with any of these merchants I had to depend entirely on my booklet idea and salesmanship. Each of them readily placed orders for the Monday delivery.

Every new program must have publicity, and newspapers are always willing to give recognition to sincere home talent. I took my sample and order book to both our local papers and received very nice notices in the Monday papers.

On that Monday at the appointed time the booklets were delivered and more orders taken. And while I wouldn't say that my first venture into publication was a masterpiece, it was fun and profitable.

Out of the \$32.50 that I collected that first hour, I paid my printer \$13.50 for the first half of the booklets ordered, bought envelopes to fit the booklets for \$1.50, and paid \$2.00 for a copyright. Allowing another dollar for incidental expenses I not only had a profit of \$14.50, but more valuable still, I had had a new experience and the satisfying joy of achievement.

□ □ □ □

Frauds, La Crescenta, Calif., asks the indulgence of contributors if reports are slow. "Work pressure and small staff have resulted in many unanswered letters on our desk," writes Jane Adams, "but we hope to do better soon."

Happiness, 421 7th Ave., New York, apparently pays very few writers for material, as several complaints have been received that payment, instead of being ½ cent a word up, as we were informed, is merely a year's subscription to the magazine.

LITERARY

MARKET TIPS

Magazine Digest, 20 Spadina Road, Toronto 4, Canada, reports that 65% of its readership is American; therefore it is interested in presenting and stressing the American point of view, and will consider topical articles of 1500 words, for which \$50 and \$75 will be paid, with adjustments made where the nature of the article or its author warrants it. "In addition to features received on speculation," writes Anne Fromer, managing editor, "we are prepared to assign articles on a wide range of subjects to be handled by specific writers in specific fields. Where it is helpful we will enclose a draft outline of the story dealing with the aspects to be considered for our purpose."

Complaints have been received that *The Bostonian Magazine*, Park Sq. Bldg., Boston, Mass., does not pay for material 30 days after acceptance, as listed.

Poultry Tribune, Mt. Morris, Ill., O. A. Hanke, editor, writes: "We would prefer not to be listed (as a market) because it merely causes to be sent to us unacceptable manuscripts, which we must then handle with short help. Our field is so highly specialized that very few free-lance writers can provide acceptable material."

Gotham Life, 225 W. 39th St., New York, Edward A. Miller, editor, buys no material.

Refrigeration Industry, The Industrial Publishing Co., 812 Huron Road, Cleveland, is being brought out in June. The magazine, starting with a circulation of 16,000, will use news, photographs, and technical articles of interest to refrigeration mechanics, dealers, jobbers, and engineers. Queries should be addressed to John M. Cannon.

Electric-Home Equipment Dealer, and *Electric Light and Power*, 360 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, have a new managing editor, Harold Shanafield. Principal editorial demand is for the *Dealer* which is actively in the market for articles about retailers whose principal business covers radios, electric stoves, washers, ironers, lighting, small appliances, and how those dealers have met the challenge of merchandising under present conditions of merchandise and labor shortage. Photos are important. Payment is made on publication at \$10 a page.

Fishing Gazette, 461 8th Ave., New York 1, needs regular correspondents from the following areas: Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, North and South Carolina, Maine and Virginia, also New Bedford, Mass.—from the coastal cities where commercial fishing is carried on. In addition to sending in regular monthly news reports, correspondents will receive special assignments. All correspondents must be located near fishing centers and reports must cover activities of commercial fishing interests, not the sports field. Any writer interested should contact C. F. Pellisier, editor, giving an idea of the commercial fishing, canning, or processing activities in his area.

Candor Magazine, Puxico, Mo., Elvin Wagner, editor, announces resumption of publication, offering a \$5 cash prize for the best poem in its July issue. It informs that all unexpired subscriptions will be completed.

Apartment Life, 333 Montgomery St., San Francisco 4, is in the market for short manuscripts of a kind likely to be enjoyed by busy wartime city dwellers, articles on the domestic scene, novelty scripts, and cartoons; tips and suggestions on decoration, cooking, home economics, entertaining—in short, how to enjoy life while living in an apartment. Rates, according to Walter H. Krieger, editor, will be arrived at via correspondence between the publication and the sender.

Popular Hobbies, P. O. Box 710, Los Angeles 52, reports: "As we are now receiving a sufficient quantity of material from readers, dealers, press agents, etc., we are discontinuing payment to professional writers, other than for very important news stories, and for special articles by experts in two or three particular fields which need better coverage." D. D. Livingston, publisher and editor, advises writers to query first. The publication is now semi-monthly, rather than weekly.

Fantasy, 950 Heberton Ave., Pittsburgh 6, Pa., will be discontinued until the return of its editor, Stanley D. Mayer, from service.

Radio Craft, 25 W. Broadway, New York 7, pays 1 cent a word on publication for short fact items and fillers with strong electronic or radio slant, and features around 1500 words dealing with electronics and radio from a popular-technical point of view, with emphasis on apparatus. Pertinent cartoons are also bought at \$3 each. Hugo Gernsback is editor; Fred Shunaman, associate editor.

The Novo Card Co., Inc., Harvey, Ill., is now open to ideas for comic greeting cards. "Ideas," writes Edward H. Postlewaite, "should tie in with Birthdays, Wedding Congratulations, Birth Congratulations, Sick and Hello cards. Ideas should be in the form of a rough sketch and must be comic." Payment is \$6 on acceptance.

Brides Magazine, 527 5th Ave., New York 17, pays on acceptance, at varying rates, for illustrated articles of 1000 to 1500 words, dealing with fashions, recipes, home decoration, etc., of interest to brides. Marian E. Murtfeldt is editor.

New Essays, P. O. Box 5343, Chicago 80, a quarterly edited by Paul Mattick, uses articles up to 10,000 words, book reviews up to 3000 words, devoted to the study of modern society. No payment is made for material.

The National Parent-Teacher, 600 S. Michigan Blvd., Chicago 5, pays 1/2 cent a word on acceptance, \$1 to \$3 for photos, for illustrated articles of about 2500 words on the rearing and education of children. Much material comes from specialists; all material should be scientifically accurate, but written in easy-to-read, informal style. Writers should query the editor, Eva H. Grant.

The Boston Post, Washington St., Boston, Mass., has for many years conducted a weekly contest for 1000-word short stories. A story is published each week-day. For the best story submitted each week, \$10 is paid, next best, \$5, and for the remaining four, \$2 each. Stories are largely written by women, for women.

CRITICISM, GHOSTING, REVISION

Consideration reading of short stories \$1.00 each under 6,000 words. Short-shorts under 2,000, 2 for \$1.00 (min. \$1.00). Novels \$5.00. Brief criticism if unsalable, or detailed treatment suggested at separate charge. Latest market information furnished for all salable material. No folder; no free readings. Personal calls by appointment only. Enclose return postage stamp for reply to queries.

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NEW YORK NEWS NOTES

Max Wilkinson has left *Esquire* . . . Larabie Cunningham new fiction editor . . . Wilkinson now associate editor at *Good Housekeeping*, where he can once again pay real prices such as he used to pay on *Collier's* . . . *Esquire* is about one-third of the top run prices on *Collier's*, and *Cosmopolitan*, and *Good Housekeeping* . . . Ed Bodin, speaking to a group of new writers recently in New York, was asked for the average prices paid in the slicks. "The slick that doesn't pay a minimum of a thin dime a word," he said, "is a bit tarnished. On short-shorts, the dime is doubled or tripled. As your name grows in prominence, the dime gets thicker until it looks like a quarter." . . . *Argosy* will pay \$200 for a short story from 4000 to 5000 words. While it takes male and female stories, the balance is mainly to the male appeal. 4000 the preferred length . . . Columbia Publications, 241 Church St., no longer buying air-war stories . . . Wm. F. Kofoed now editor of *Everybody's Digest* . . . Former editor, Florence Brobeck, once with *Tomorrow Magazine*, is now with *American Weekly* as women's editor. L. C. Moise and George O'Neal handle *American Weekly* articles of general nature . . . Merton S. Yewdale of Robert S. McBride Co., 116 E. 16th St., is looking for a good mystery book . . . When you put a WAC in your story for Standard Magazines, be sure you know your background, as the wife of Leo Margulies, editorial director of all the Standard magazines, is a member of the WAC . . . John Gainford, editor, Stephen Daye Inc., the old New England publishing house at 48 E. 42nd St., welcomes books that real Americans can appreciate . . . *Life Story Magazine* pays \$5 for short poems that inspire women, and which cover the policy "adventures in living." . . . Be sure your story has a strong plot if you send it to John K. McCaffery, fiction editor of the *American Magazine*. The mood or stream of consciousness or character story is not for him.—D. O. N.

□ □ □ □

The International Mark Twain Society, Webster Groves, Missouri, is offering \$5 for the best limerick on Mark Twain. Entries must reach Cyril Clemens, president, by June 15, 1944. Judges: Stephen Leacock, Frank Sullivan, James Thurber.

□ □ □

Ziff-Davis Report

A. & J.:

Effective April 6, 1944, all pulp magazines published by the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company (at present *Amazing Stories*, *Fantastic Adventures*, *Mammoth Detective*) will pay a basic minimum of 1¼ cents per word and ranging up to 3 cents per word according to the merits of the story being purchased.

Authors and agents are urged to study current trends in these pulps before submitting. The editors pay special attention to writers capable of effective slanting toward their special requirements.

Basic elements of all stories must be carefully directed plot; human and believable characters; emphasis on convincing action; logical motivation; convincing development; direct thread of continuity no matter how complex the plot; clarity of presentation; credibility. The story is the thing; the characters are the story. The background is merely the vehicle; i. e. John Jones' invention is not the story. John Jones' crime is not the story.

The editors welcome plot synopses, although the only decision on such synopses that means anything is "thumbs down." They don't want writers to waste time on material which has no chance at all. Synopses should only be submitted for longer lengths.

Lengths of material for all books range from 1500 to 75,000 words. Every story takes a definite number of words to tell it; use them, and no more.

Ziff Davis, RAY PALMER, Managing Editor.
Fiction Group,
540 N. Michigan,
Chicago, Ill.

SHORT-SHORTS FOR THE McCLURE SYNDICATE

What constitutes an acceptable McClure Syndicate short-short?

We put this question to Adelaide Price Waldo, president of this leading buyer of 900-1000-word shorts for newspaper syndication.

Her answer: "A good idea and something interesting to say. Brevity calls for a simple and direct plot, clear-cut characterization, carefully selected material and unity.

"There is no room in so few words for a long introduction, so the background must be given in good dialogue. Reader interest should be captured immediately, and carried through to the end, by starting as near the climax as possible. Motivation is important. Too long a period of time should not be attempted."

And the most common mistakes?

"The most distressing is the use of old, old themes, so trite and worn out that the opening sentence in most cases indicates the end. We look for originality.

"When an author writes about something he doesn't know anything about, the story doesn't ring true. How can it? Yet currently, stay-at-homes venture to describe action in all the theatres of war, with not the slightest knowledge of technicalities. With no research, no checking of facts, they knock off their stories, and are content so long as they have hit on situations pleasing to themselves.

"But this is not pleasing to us. We have our own sources of information and, where the idea is good enough to bother with, we do get in touch with these sources. But it is very annoying.

"Boys in training camps often send us good material, for they write from their own experiences. Many pounce on incidents and work them up into acceptable stories."

What about this surprise-ending business?

"The unexpected ending must be plausible and natural. Dragging in a surprise twist won't make a lengthened incident into an acceptable story."

Just what is your formula?

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"We received a manuscript that had possibilities and asked the writer, by letter, for permission to edit it for our needs. Consent was cheerfully given. With the check we enclosed a mimeographed copy of the story as it was mailed to our subscribing papers. (We always do that.)

"Presently came a note of acknowledgment and the words: 'You asked if you might edit, but gee! I think I ought to pay you for the work you did on my story instead of taking money for it.'

"The other example is of a 'boy who made good.'

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The Grail, St. Meinrad, Ind., a monthly edited by Rev. Jerome Palmer, O. S. B., pays on acceptance, according to merits of material, for short stories and short-shorts, wholesome, entertaining, not necessarily religious, for young folks, and articles on social and ethical problems of the day, with emphasis on the racial problem. Photographs are used, but no poetry. Prompt report on material is promised.

Cross-Words and Contest News, 215 4th Ave., New York 3, pays 1 cent a word and up on publication, for short stories, 1200 to 1600 words, of interest to cross-word puzzle fans. They may include a cross-word puzzle or cypher as a solution to a mystery. Also used are brief items dealing with the activities of contest fans. Occasionally a cross-word puzzle is purchased from a free lance. Interested puzzle fans should send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Walter H. Holze, editor, for list of requirements and rates.

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The National Thespian Society, College Hill Sta., Cincinnati 24, is offering cash awards totaling \$675 for the ten best original one-act plays for young people which strengthen and preserve the democratic way of life. First prize is \$150, second, \$100; third, \$75, and \$50 each for the next seven best plays. All entries must be postmarked by not later than midnight, January 1, 1945. In a second contest, the Society is offering \$225 in prizes for the best papers on the role of the educational theatre in post-war America, to be distributed thus: \$50 and \$25 for the two best papers on each of the following subjects: "The Role of the Children's Theatre in Post-war America;" "The Role of the High School Theatre in Postwar America;" and "The Role of the College (University) Theatre in Postwar America." Closing date is October 1, 1944. For complete discussion of these subjects, and full details of both contests, write to the Society at the above address.

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